

Remarks

Independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended to more clearly define the invention and distinguish it over U.S. Patent No. 6,296,237 to Nagai, principally relied upon in the rejection of Applicant's claims. A new claim 28 further has been added which is deemed to recite structure clearly distinguishable over the prior art. It is submitted that claims 1-27, as amended, and newly submitted claim 28 recite structure which is neither disclosed nor taught by any of the references of record taken either singularly or in combination.

Each of the claims specifically recites a first flexible or compressible member having a cup-shaped configuration, a second compressible member having a portion received within the recess of the cup-shaped member and a rigid ring or band encircling the first flexible or compressible member. Such structure clearly is not disclosed or taught by Nagai. The Nagai Patent merely discloses a rigid, metallic cup-shaped member 14, a substantially annular, compressible member 38 disposed within the rigid cup-shaped member having an annular flange overlying an annular flange of the rigid, cup-shaped member, and a compressible member 12 seated in the rigid, metallic cup-shaped member within annular compressible member 38. Such structure is both structurally and functionally different from the construction and function of the claimed invention as recited in the amended claims. It clearly does not provide for the compressible cup-shaped member having a rigid ring or band encircling the compressible cup-shaped member, the width of which may be varied to correspondingly vary the displacement of the structural members and the cushioning effect of the assembly.

Newly submitted claim 28 more specifically defines the height of the compressible cup-shaped member having a selected height and the width of the encircling band member having a dimension selected from a group of dimensions each being not greater than the selected

dimension of the height of the compressible cup-shaped member. Such structure permits the design and fabrication of a device providing prescribed cushioning effect of the assembly and the displacement of the structural members merely by the selection of the proper width of the rigid ring or band encircling the compressible cup-shaped member. Clearly such capability is not provided by the Nagai Patent or any of the other references of record.

In view of the foregoing, it respectfully is requested that the rejection of claims 1 through 27 be withdrawn, such claims and the newly submitted claim be allowed and that the application be passed to issue. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment of fees or credit any overpayment of fees in connection with this communication to Deposit Account 19-4375.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter N. Lalos
Registration No. 19,789
STEVENS, DAVIS, MILLER & MOSHER, LLP
1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 850
Washington, D.C. 20036-5622

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